

Appropriation Committee
March 23, 2011

Co Chairs – Senator Toni Harp and Representative Walker

My Name is Rev Lindsay E. Curtis, Pastor of the Grace Baptist Church in Norwalk and Chair of the Board of Director for the South Norwalk Collegiate Academy. This is a vision that was birthed 5 years ago out of a desire to provide our children with school choice. I am a product of a public education but I had and have gotten to a place that I found myself utterly frustrated and angry with the nonsensical achievement gap, suspension rate, the disgraceful drop-out and graduation rates, specifically for children of color. It is why I join others who have called this the number 1 civil rights issue of our time. We continue to provide more financial resources toward incarceration rather than education. I continue to work with in conjunction with our Public Schools collaboratively because in order to fix this horrendous educational situation that we have in Connecticut it is going to take all of us to educate our children and ultimately address the problem of many issues inclusive of youth violence. This is not an issue of them or us but rather using all the tools in the tool box and this is why we should support Student Based funding.

Our prospective school has as its mission to cultivate a community that everyone clearly understands that it has a stake and is committed to do their best. Our students will engage in a rigorous program to develop their critical thinking skills, character and social and cultural awareness so that they can be prepared for the future that lies ahead, whether it includes college or some other vocational skills training. It is our firm belief that what is needed is independent, critical thinking and the foundational skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Additionally, to build capacity of all of our children to be responsible community members and to develop the skills needed to compete and participate fully in this global environment. We intend to pursue and exceed these very ambitious goals with the same commitment found in the affluent and high achieving schools found in the state and beyond. Specifically for the last two years and more a community planned team has been in engaged in a labor of love with the goal to begin with Kindergarten and to graduate students from the eighth grade who are reading at and above grade level fully equipped to compete and excel in a rigorous college preparatory program at the high school level.

The question is why we as state wouldn't use every opportunity, every resource, and every committed effort to give our children the best in educational opportunities. Why limit ourselves to only one methodology, to provide for Student Based Funding gives all of our children and the parents a choice equal opportunity to seek and pursue avenues that challenge them and seeks to provide a quality education. Why now, may be a question, but the better question is why not now our children and families need it NOW – let us support Student Based Funding !!!!

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